

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 13th, 2020 7:30pm

In attendance: Judy Goldberg, Andy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Debbie Glass, Justin Lewitus, Jocylyn Bailin, Jim Billings, Marcos Szydlo, Jesse Wertheimer, Lizza Sandoe, Steve Probst, John Harper, Judy Sletzinger, Laurie Margolies, Ellen Glickman-Simon, Mary K. Eliot

Hebrew with Janet: Janet Buchwald

Aim High – Ayin/Lamed/Hey

Welcome: Judy Goldberg

Y'all keep showing up – thanks!

Approval of Minutes: Jocylyn Bailin

Motion: To approve minutes from 1/9/20 Board meeting. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

Rabbi Report: Rabbi Breindel (submitted electronically)

Ritual

- Joined with High School, Lorel and Shoni for Tu BiShvat seder.

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- Led funeral (off-site) for Adele Cohen, sister to Herb Rosen.

Community outreach/events

- Recorded a spot for Chagigah on Tu BiShevat; aired on Sun., 2/9. Will coordinate with Hal to record a spot on HiBuR experiences after returning from Israel.
- Taught on *chesed* at **Shillman House**. Second session planned for Monday 3/2 at 10:00 AM. Help requested in spreading the word that it's open to all!
- **40 students from Nichols College** students joined us for Shabbat last Friday; I led a talkback with them following the service.

Programming and education

- **Great Jewish Stories** class has been started in its new time and format. Averaging a little over 20 participants/session. Streamed for the first time this week.
- **Interfaith MLK commemoration at Beth El** was a very positive experience. Looking forward to similar collaborations.
- Led **adult education movie night** on Sat., 2/1 on *Pi*. Very impressed by community's engagement and insights with a very challenging movie. Looking forward to many more, in the future!

Administrative

- **New leadership cohort** progressing; coordinating with Judy, Jocylyn and Ken.
- Participated in **IJS clergy leadership retreat** – an AMAZING experience! So grateful for the opportunity... Feeling grounded and inspired with new teachings!
- Away with **Hibur** for our Israel trip (2/12-2/23)! Returning to office on 2/27.
- Grateful to Tom Rose for his work on the **Safety Forum** at which I led an introductory teaching. This is a strong step forward for our community

Temple Administrator's report: Beth Schine (submitted electronically)

Membership: 246

One new member in past month: Len & Carolyn Finn

Security

- Fobs have been handed out to 205 of our members, including 18 HS students. We'll continue to get them to all members who need them. As more and more people have them, it's working pretty well. We want to strongly urge people to bring and use their fobs whenever they come (i.e. not ring the doorbell rather than fish the fob out of their bag!). There is clearly some tweaking to do with some of the programming, and we're getting that worked out.
- Tom is working with Chief Nix on scheduling the next training session, hoping for a date in approx. a month.
- We are working on staffing Sunday evenings and Monday evenings for door monitoring/greeting – pursuing a couple of different possibilities, as the regular Sunday person we had fell through due to changing demands of her regular job.

Membership issues: Beth plans to send letters to 3 members who have been nonresponsive both in terms of making any payments, and have not made any arrangements about dues for at least the past year. The letter will let them know that we need to hear from them in the next month in order to keep them as active members, and if we don't, their names will be brought to the Board to be removed as members.

Building – Water fountain/bottle filler is scheduled to be installed on Feb. 25th

Personal – Beth will be on vacation next week (2/15 thru 2/22), back in the office on 2/24. Jane will be in the office Tues. – Thurs., Debby Young covering on Friday.

Carob Tree II Presentation: Ellen Glickman-Simon and Mary K. Eliot

Goal tonight: to endorse the timeline and to endorse continuing to work with Mary K. Eliot.

Here is why we need this initiative:

- We need to take a bold step towards the future!
- It is time to develop and lift up our congregation. Right now as a congregation we are dwindling. If we do nothing we will continue to dwindle.
- This initiative promises to help us create a vision to enhance our community in all ways – physically, programmatically, and more.
- The Rabbi, the Cantor, have given their unconditional support. The Beth El Fund for the Future allocations committee has also given their support by allocating \$8,000 towards campaign expenses.
- An anonymous donor has already given a \$72,000 donation. Another large donation is expected this week.

Details:

Two documents were sent out earlier in the week.

The following changes to the initiative were made based upon feedback from the December Board workshop and discussions with clergy, staff, and lay leadership:

- The facilities funding will be available first. \$10,000 was added to the facilities budget
- RJB asked for increased funding for growth planning and membership –building. An extra \$30,000 was allocated.
- These changes came mostly from reductions to the social justice spendable line item.

The **timeline** was reviewed. See timeline document as attachment to minutes.

Discussion:

Q: What size do we need to be to sustain ourselves? Will we be in a position to cover our expenses once the CTII seed money runs out in 2-3 years?

MK: the numbers listed in the timeline and overview documents were based on the size that the congregation was during Carob Tree I. They may no longer be realistic based on the current community population, but it's good to aim high. We can and will adjust as we go along.

Planning involves cultivation events with potential lead donors, a feasibility study, and more. The CTII team will pull together focus groups and meet with current and past leadership, etc. *A final report on the CTII initiative should be finished by December 2020 or early January 2021 at the latest.*

When the final report is ready: at that time if it is determined that we don't have the capacity to raise the target amount then the amount will be revised downwards. Also at that time, if it is determined that moving forward with a CTII campaign is not advisable, and/or if the Board declines to support CTII, Mary K will give suggestions and guidance on how to move forward with growing funding for our budget.

If CTII is approved at that time, then we will look to hire a campaign manager. We will pull together focus groups and start making visits to all congregants who agree to receive a visit (the campaign will never force a visit on anyone).

Fundraising:

- Secret of fundraising: If you send a letter, you receive \$1. If you make a phone call, you receive \$10. If you visit and talk with people face-to-face you receive \$100.
- Buy-in from the Board is essential. As a Board member you must be prepared to give – the amount doesn't matter, the participation does. This will be asked not only of you as the current Board but also of the incoming Board that will be in place starting July 1.
- \$98,000 of the funds raised in CTI came from small, regular donations – in honor of/ in memory of/ in gratitude for, etc. IT became a habit for people to donate to the CT initiative to mark simchas, sorrows, milestones and more. We will seek to re-engage this habit!
- **Q:** How will CTII affect other current fundraising?
A: CTII has its own life and its own trajectory. Donations to CTII will be above and beyond regular giving. *It will be made explicit* that people cannot and must not substitute one kind of giving for the other.
- **Q:** CTI had a 5-year pay period. After 5 years, do we still pursue unfulfilled pledges?
A: We went back and had another conversation with the donors. Encouraged fulfillment, talked about options such as legacy giving, giving stock options, etc. If that was not successful then we let it go. There really were very few incidents of this.
- **Q:** What about seeking donations from large and/or small Jewish family foundations? Non-Beth El members?
A: Hadn't considered this. Ellen/Mary K. will discuss and do a bit of research.

Message from RJB: Rabbi Breindel pre-recorded a video in support of CTII.

CTII is an important part of our development as a community. We need to look at who we are now and who we might become, and rejoice in both. Our future can be one of strength and excitement; let us move forward together in joy and delight.

Motion: *That the Board endorse moving forward with the Carob Tree II revitalizing campaign per the stated timeline.* (*note that this is not an approval of the overall initiative, only an approval to move forward with next steps through the issuing of final feasibility report).

Motion approved: *unanimously with one abstention*

Flag Report: Judy Goldberg for Michael Brown

Our new flag is up – as of this evening! A big *thank you to Lizza* for procuring and delivering the flag. Another big *thank you to Andy Goldberg* for putting it up (right before this meeting!).

Reminder of Special Board Meeting Thursday February 27th at 7:30pm

Meeting adjourned 8:53pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jocelyn Bailin
Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley